



Helen Hood makes her profession as a tertiary at a meeting in Perth in November 2010



First and Third

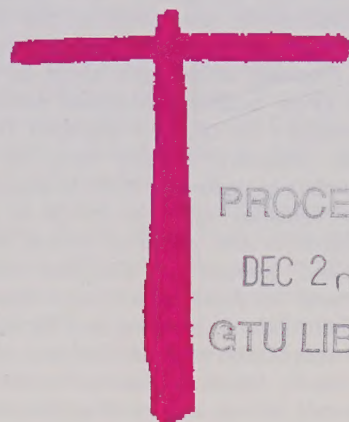
Anselm SSF

If your memory is long enough to encompass life in the 50's, you'll recall that 'first' and 'third' class described railway seats - 'second' had mysteriously disappeared. Not so with the Society of Saint Francis, for that comprised First, Second and Third Orders and if there was a mystery it was that which veiled the Third Order from the view of any but the chosen few. It was the creation of Father Algy and the legendary Dorothy Swayne, and there was no talk of Areas or Regions or statistics or names even - in fact, among the rank and file there was no talk at all, which opened the door to all kinds of speculation.

This issue of *franciscan* explores the subsequent development and expansion (in all directions) of the Third Order from various viewpoints. My task is to give an impression of how the First and Third Orders interrelated over the period, decade by decade, in an unashamedly personal and anecdotal manner. I shall not hesitate to drop names (you will have already noticed two), so here is evidence from one who was successively a Hooke brother, a Beamington brother, a Scunthorpe brother, a Cambridge brother, a Birmingham brother and a Glasshampton brother. Let me say at the outset that I simply offer these memories as impressions,

with no attempt at any kind of analysis - if the reader can spot any developing trends in the way First and Third Orders connect over this period, let her or him do so - never forgetting the role of the Second Order, our sisters at Freeland, whose prayers from 1950 onwards have been crucial to the life of the Society of Saint Francis.

In the 60's and 70's I was a Dorset brother, mostly as the 'headmaster' at St Francis' School, Hooke, near Beaminster and have one memory during those eventful years of a Third Order contact. There was to be a gathering in Exeter, and I was invited to speak to the group - inevitably, about the life and work of



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The Third Order SSF

The Third Order is open to men and women, ordained and lay, married and single, young and old who live in the city, town and countryside. They are people who feel that God is calling them to live out a Franciscan vocation of simplicity, love and reconciliation in the world, while remaining committed to family responsibilities and engaged in the ordinary tasks of life. The Third Order offers a life of challenge and support for those who are called to a deeper commitment to Christ and to a life under vow. There are currently over 2,000 members of the Third Order (called tertiaries) in the European Province throughout England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Sweden.

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brothers at the school. I drove down to Devon; there was the eucharist in a lovely little church in the cathedral close, and I suppose sandwiches and talk, organised by Joan Levett. Before dropping that name, I looked it up and found that she now lives in Axminster. I wonder whether she can remember that day?

The 70's (long hair, and growing disillusionment) gave way to the 80's (Thatcher, the Falklands, yuppieism) - and I spread wheels and wings as the First Order brothers' European Minister Provincial. Ex officio, I attended Third Order chapters usually held at St Columba's in Woking, in order to acquaint those tertiaries with the doings of our brothers in the province which then included houses in England (from Cornwall to Northumberland), Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Tanzania with a population of about 100 friars. With my recent experience as a teacher of science I was an enemy of waffle and a firm believer in visual presentation, so there accompanied me on my travels a camera, and a slide projector. My slot at the TO chapters always included the latest transparencies from the First Order houses and left me with memories chiefly of Mary Johnson, then Guardian of the TO European Province and firmly in the chair at chapter, and many others - for me Mary was my top tertiary and I miss her very much.

From time to time Provincial Chapter (FO) has become concerned about

leadership in the First Order, and to help with the brain-racking process it was decided to assemble a think tank at St Edward's House in Westminster. We discovered that in the ranks of the Third Order there was a General, no less, and Hugh Beach generously gave of his time and wisdom to come and help us to grapple with this perennial problem.

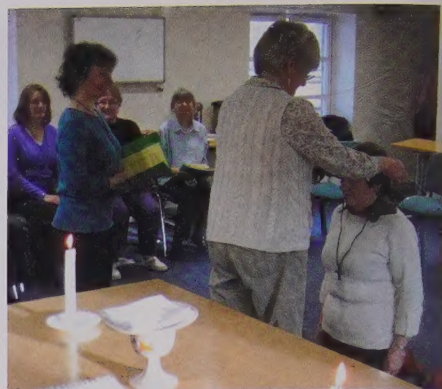
As well as being a roving minister, I was from 1984 a Scunthorpe brother (half time) - and this brought lots of contacts with Lincolnshire tertiaries. Foremost among them has to be Rachel Ollard whose conviction it was that First Order brothers were in dire need of lavish hospitality. Twice a year, on Boxing Day and Easter Monday, we all went in the car over to Scallows Hall for a splendid lunch straight from the Aga, and on one such occasion we were able to express our gratitude by giving her a hare which had come into fatal contact with our radiator twenty minutes earlier.

When the house was opened by the Bishop of Grimsby (David Tustin, a Companion of SSF) the Third Order was there in force. Later I became a regular visitor to St James', Louth to hear confessions at the invitation of David Owen, team rector, and yes (later), a tertiary. The late Madeline Ruddock was another of that valiant band who visited the Scunthorpe house regularly.

Also while in Scunthorpe we had links with the RC Secular Franciscan Order at St Bernadette's. And, an invitation came from the Midlands TO to help with a regional event to be held at St Paul's, Balsall Heath in Birmingham - and this included a planning day with Elisabeth Stirling, Daphne Cook and Doreen Lambert. Subsequently, over the years, Elisabeth shared her generous hospitality in Ketton, conveniently situated between Cambridge and Birmingham on the railway.

However, it is in the nature of Franciscans to come and go, and after thirteen years the Scunthorpe house closed. Five years earlier, I had become a Cambridge brother, and parish priest at St Bene't's. Waiting for me in the congregation and in leading positions were Pamela Hill - soon to become churchwarden, Pamela Middleton (PCC Treasurer), Elizabeth Walser, Alice Knewstubb, Pam Yates and the late Thelma Frost. It was a very real bonus to have a Franciscan presence in the congregation - many more, of course, in the Cambridge neighbourhood - and to know that it's still there though the brothers have (sadly) moved on.

At the turn of the millennium my time in Cambridge came to an end, and I exchanged Botolph Lane for Claerwen Grove in which stood the Birmingham friary of SSF on the Ley Hill Estate in Northfield. There was no Third Order presence on Ley Hill, and a scattering of tertiaries in other parts of the city - so there was an opportunity for providing a



Receiving the Third Order cross

meeting place in the shape of a good old fashioned festival at Francistide. The place was found - St Francis' Church, Bournville. At midday, Sung Eucharist, preacher, David Walker TO, Bishop of Dudley, bring your own lunch, a talk by Brother Desmond Alban, about seventy people (yes, mostly elders) and a good TO presence including Peter Dixon the Area Minister. This was all in the noughties, and a part of the background to the brothers' work among young people with very little in the way of stability or education to give them a start in life. Andrew Anderson invited me twice in those years to Yorkshire to speak to his Area Meeting, in Ripon first, and then Pickering.

I write from Glasshampton which is a sort of crossroads for First and Third Orders - seldom are we without tertiaries in retreat or on a shorter visit, at present Bob and Margaret Bell from near Lincoln. Local tertiaries - Guy and Mary Smith, John and Cathryn Parkes - help us with the garden. We were able, with some of the Birmingham sisters, to join the Third Order at a recent Cluster Meeting and so meet with Joanna Coney, Ruth Wintle and others at a special occasion, including friends from Birmingham.

And that's the story so far. And the lesson? For me, that the Society of Saint Francis comprises in three orders and the Companions a body of people whose faith and vocation find strength and grace in mutual friendship - and for whom those friendships are enriched by a common membership of Christ. *f*



Anselm SSF lives at Glasshampton Friary

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Two thousand tertiaries strong: the development of TSSF from small beginnings.

Denise Mumford TSSF

"Thou art the Man," cried Fr Winslow, as at that moment Algy Robertson, always late, walked into the room.' This quote is from an unpublished paper by Dorothy Swayne, who may be best described as the Founder of the Third Order. She and fellow Franciscan associates had grouped together during the late 1920's under an umbrella body, the Fellowship of the Way. They passionately hoped for the development of an Anglican Franciscan Order to which they might be attached as tertiaries.

Dorothy Swayne, at a time of spiritual crisis, had written to her friend, Deaconess Carol Graham, a missionary in India, for advice. Carol Graham was a member of the Third Order of Christa Seva Sangha, a Christian Ashram, started in 1920-22 by the Revd Jack Winslow, who hoped thereby to offer Christianity to India in an Indian rather than European guise. CSS had recently been reformed as a Franciscan Religious Order. Fr Algy Robertson, a First Order Brother of the Sangha, had been invalidated out of India, and become Vicar of St Ives, Hunts. There he had founded a tiny English branch of CSS in his vicarage.

Meanwhile Jack Winslow was on furlough, and had been asked to attend a meeting of the Fellowship of the Way to advise the Franciscan associates in England. His finger pointed to Algy Robertson, the man for the task, and Algy willingly accepted the proposal to set up a Third Order, attached to his fragile, English, first Order branch of CSS. Shortly after, Father Algy and Dorothy Swayne met at her Club in Central London, where they adapted the Rule of CSS for the new Franciscan Third Order, which came into being in January 1931. The *Principles*, to which tertiaries turn every day in their prayers, had been written by Jack Winslow for CSS, and are still an important part of the Rule of the Society of St Francis.

It took another six years before the CSS in St Ives and BSFA (another small Franciscan Order) in Dorset finally agreed to a merger, and the Society of St Francis was formed. Thus, in 1937, TSSF, as we know it today, began its life, with Fr Algy, who had moved to Cerne Abbas (now Hilfield Friary) as Father Guardian and Dorothy Swayne as Assistant Guardian of the Third Order and Senior Novice Mistress.

The Third Order in its early days was very dependent on the First. The Guardian and Chaplain General were First Order priest friars. Tertiaries (as now) served six months as postulants and two years as novices before profession. Numbers rose steadily, by 1951 reaching a plateau of 300 plus. There was a high level of commitment to the Aims of the Order; Dorothy Swayne, the leading

tertiary, who had lived in voluntary poverty while working alongside the poor of South London, was uncompromising about simplicity of life: 'Members of the Third Order shall strictly limit their personal expenditure to such things as are necessary for the health and efficiency of themselves and those who are dependent on them.' (*Early Days*, 1953, p.5.)

*Fr Algy was particularly
insistent on the importance
of "hiddenness" for the
Third Order and for that
reason any outward badge
or habit, any publicity ...
was prohibited.*

Growth of the Third Order was restricted partly by the fact that new members were generally invited to join: for example, Hugh Beach, who was at Cambridge after war service, and became involved with SSF, was 'summoned to see Fr Algy,' whom he found in bed clutching a hot water bottle. 'In his threadbare little voice, he said, "We think it would be a good idea if you became a member of the Third Order." In a sense this struck me as another posting from a higher authority, so naturally I took up his suggestion.' (*Memoir*, 2003, p.58). Fr Algy's word was law; Dorothy Swayne writes: 'Fr Algy was particularly insistent on the importance of "hiddenness" for the Third Order, and for that reason any outward badge or habit, any publicity, any talking about the Third Order to all and sundry, was prohibited.' (*Letter*, 1962). Hiddenness was seen as an encouragement to humility in the religious life. Looking back, some tertiaries feel that during the early years, TSSF was like a secret society, but the intensity and obedience of that period must be remembered.

Fr Algy was also 'very insistent that we should not join together to run tertiary "good works",' continued Dorothy Swayne, (*Ibid*, 1962). Again the intention was 'hiddenness.' This remains general practice within the Order. Although most tertiaries in their separate lives are

involved in prayer and works, there is reluctance among Third Order members to band together in social or political action on behalf of the poor - as First Order brothers have done from the start. (The classic example is of Br Douglas, the original Father Minister of SSF, in his work with wayfarers.)

The person probably most responsible for the growth of the Third Order was Br Edward SSF, who died only in 2010 at Alnmouth, and to whom tertiaries owe a huge debt of gratitude. In 1974, he was asked to become Guardian of the Third Order. Hugh Beach writes: 'It was an inspired choice.... He toured the land, constantly expanding the number of tertiaries by his talent for making friends. Under his rubric, the Order became the very opposite of reclusive.' (Talk, 1998). The membership in the European Province stands now at over 2000.

Br Edward also encouraged the Third Order to become more independent in its leadership: "He was successively Guardian, Chaplain General, Chaplain and finally Assistant Chaplain - a series of demotions which was the direct result of promoting tertiaries into all the positions held by friars." (*Ibid*, 1998). Edward stepped down in 1994, and was the last friar to hold office in the Third Order. This was seen as 'a virtue rising out of necessity,' and 'time for the Third Order to come of age.' (Platten, 2009). However, many tertiaries still owe their membership

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Professed in 2001, Denise Mumford is Area Formation Guardian in the South London Area and a member of the Study and Prayer network.



TSSF's networks of service

Eight hundred years ago, Francis is reputed to have sought out the advice of his best friend and mentor, Clare, about what was holier: to pray or to work? Should he continue to lead a life of humble service amongst the excluded people of society, as he had been doing, or retreat into a monastic life committed to silence and prayer? Her response, after considerable prayer, was full of wisdom: his vocation was to combine both vocations into his own unique form of spirituality: a life of compassionate service grounded in contemplative prayer.

This spirituality is embedded in our Three Ways of Service: Prayer, Study and Work. Over the past 10 years, several networks have either evolved within TSSF or have engaged members of the Third Order (having been established by members of the First Order). These have encouraged and supported fellow members as well as establishing deeper ties with the other Franciscan Orders. They include: the Contemplative Group; TSSF Study and Prayer (S&P); the JPIC Network; Franciscan Aid; and the Provincial Engagements Group (PEG).

The Contemplative Group

A workshop at the 1999 Residential Chapter led to a group of 18 tertiaries discussing 'Leading the Solitary Life in the TSSF'. Afterwards they hoped to keep in touch with each other, and find others who shared this vocation.

Dorothy and John Dennis write:

We became linked together by providing our names to each other and publishing some news in a six monthly 'Solitaries Newsletter'. Among us are some with a strong vocation, others in whom it is less marked and many who have become solitary by reason of age or infirmity and who give more space and time to this life of prayer because they are no longer easily able to go to meetings.

Backing of Provincial Chapter was gained with the recommendation that a minimum requirement might be: 1. to submit the annual report that all tertiaries make to their Area Formation Guardian and to attend the Renewal of Vows at Francistide; 2. to have our name on the list of our local group and honour that attachment by praying regularly for our brothers and sisters; 3. to discuss with our spiritual director what is appropriate regarding attendance at meetings.

The local groups have been encouraged to be aware of a tertiary who is taking a more solitary path. Many of them do attend local group meetings regularly and frequently hold office as well. The local group also needs to include that person in their fellowship by prayer, the imparting of news, making requests for prayer, and establishing regular contacts. Thus the possibilities of this way of life can be explored and monitored for the benefit of the whole Order.

The newsletter has recently changed its

name to the 'Contemplatives Newsletter', abandoning the word 'Solitary' with its connotations of the hermit life, as few, if any, tertiaries are living as hermits. Their role is simply to be more contemplative than active.

There are now a little over 100 of us.

Two things firmly bind us to each other. The first is the circulated intercession sheet, laid out in Areas, so that we can all pray for each other. We can also make contact with those who live nearby and support each other in that way. The second is the newsletter itself, intended as a means of encouraging those who receive it to continue on their own journey.

For more information:

John and Dorothy Dennis, 01962 868881. or johndor_dennis@talktalk.net.

TSSF Study and Prayer Group

Our Principles (Days 17 and 18) and the TSSF Basic Rule encourage us to study in an individually suitable way. The Study and Prayer steering group defines study very broadly as a part of our formation, seeing it as "what tertiaries are thinking, reading, discussing and maybe writing about". For some years we have been organising study events in our Franciscan houses, always grateful to SSF for their hospitality. An annual study week takes place each October at Alnmouth Friary, plus a weekend event in the spring which has often been at the Clares' guest house at Freeland, though in 2010 it was at Hilfield Friary. At the study week tertiaries choose their own topic; it is always stimulating to see new ideas and connections emerge about the Franciscan life and about the Third Order. The weekend events are themed (Obedience; the work of Fr Richard Rohr; the Enneagram). Written papers form the staple diet of these events, and can be anything from simple, serious reflection to something more academic. Many of

these papers are on the Study and Prayer page of the TSSF website (http://www.tssf.org.uk/Members/TSSF_Studies.html)

Tertiary creativity is expressed in a variety of forms: apart from the papers, we have enjoyed a meditation on icons painted by a participant; a guided spiritual walk; and an artist in residence.

At these events, we share the life and worship of a First or Second Order Franciscan community for a short time. We find this deepens vocations and Third Order fellowship, and indeed it is partly why these activities are called "study and prayer". A more recent focus has been on encouraging study by individual tertiaries and within their local groups and areas. It is encouraging that local initiatives are increasingly taking place, such as the 2010 pan-London area meeting on "Obedience". In September 2010 we



Members of the TSSF Study and Prayer Group who organised the Richard Rohr event: John Wiltshire, Richard Rohr OFM, Nancy Adams, Anne Lindley, Rev'd Lindsay Meader (a priest at St James) and Nell Slocock.

organised our largest event on behalf of TSSF, a conference led by Richard Rohr on 'Action and Contemplation: Franciscan Spirituality Today' at which most of the 450 people present were from the Franciscan Orders. The two days spent together were challenging and inspiring.

TSSF Study and Prayer is intended to be a mainstream part of Third Order life and of our collective formation as tertiaries, encouraging the sharing of ideas and spiritual formation.

For more information:

John Wiltshire: katherine.wiltshire1@ntlworld.com or 07717 547672; or Tom Keighley: nurprc@nursing.u-net.com

The Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Network

This Network was set up in April 2003 by Averil Swanton with the encouragement of Dick Bird, then Minister Provincial, at a time when Br Damian was trying to build closer links between the First Order and Christian Aid. She invited all Areas to nominate a JPIC representative and the Network now has JPIC Area Representatives in nearly 75% of the T O Areas as well as representatives from SSF, CSF and SFO. It has operated

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primarily as an e-mail communication network, keeping its members informed of JPIC news, events and campaigns.

JPIC has hosted a few study weeks in partnership with the TSSF Study and Prayer group. The first two took place at Alnmouth, and the third was at Hilfield. We wanted to actively show our support of Hilfield Friary and the way in which it promotes "the Franciscan values of care for creation, working for peace and justice, and seeking respectful dialogue with people of other faiths."

*Franciscan Aid
responds to the needs
of people in Third World
countries with whom
Franciscans are in contact
and whose needs are known
so that they can be aided
quickly and precisely.*

In 2008 the Network was invited by Br Hugh to send a delegate to the annual conference of the JPIC Links Group of Religious (which until then had only included members of Religious communities within the Roman Catholic and Anglican Orders). Nancy Adams attended on behalf of TSSF in 2008 and 2009, after which the Links Group invited TSSF, along with other secular Orders, to join as a full member. Chapter agreed to this in 2009. The most recent meeting of JPIC Area Reps set up a Steering Group with representatives of TSSF, SSF and SFO to take the JPIC Network forward over the years ahead.

For more information:

Nancy Adams: nancy@newbigging.org

Franciscan Aid

This charitable trust was set up by Br. Geoffrey SSF in 1982 with Mary Johnson and Bob Diaper (Guardian and Treasurer respectively) of the European Province of TSSF. Its object is "to relieve poverty and advance education of deprived people from third world countries whose needs may not be covered by other agencies and those with whom the Franciscans are in contact and whose needs are known so that they can be aided quickly and precisely." The trust is now managed by a group of UK tertiaries, in consultation with the Minster General and Ministers Provincial TSSF and the Minister General and European Minister Provincial SSF. The trustees meet three times a year to review applications from TSSF and SSF members throughout the world. Some recent examples of our work are:

- ❖ A refrigerator for an Evangelical Lutheran Boys' Home and replacing 20 computers for Hope Secondary School, both in Beit Jala, Palestine.
- ❖ A sanitation project for disabled people in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

- ❖ Payment of registration fees for two nurses for midwifery training in Zambia.
- ❖ A Franciscan Reading Room in Brazil's largest favela (shanty town).
- ❖ Refurbishing wells for Mongolian horses after two years of terrible winters.
- ❖ Providing fans, blackboards and desks for Deedhandu school, Delhi

We generally do not fund building costs or tertiary education fees. Detailed funding guidelines and an application form can be obtained from the Secretary: Helen Mossop: hmosso@doctors.org.uk

The Third Order and Mission

One of the ways the Third Order seeks to fulfill our Profession Vow "to spread the knowledge and love of Christ" is our involvement, with the First Order, in the Provincial Engagements Group: PEG, for short. It is where all applications for Franciscan participation in missions are received and considered. PEG consists of the First Order Provincial Ministers, Br. Martin as secretary and a member of the Third Order Provincial Chapter.

Requests received are for parish missions, teaching weeks, and preachers for Holy Week. In addition brothers and sisters are selected to run the Families Camp and the Youth Camp at Hilfield and to be a presence at large gatherings such as Greenbelt, New Wine and Soul Survivor. Arrangements for Missions is quite a lengthy procedure: with review points by PEG along the way, to ensure that it is an appropriate project for us to take on. Sometimes the Team Leader will ask for a tertiary to join that team. The TO representative chooses a person who has volunteered for missions, matching their skills and strengths to the situation.

Third Order involvement in this group provides another opportunity for fellowship and feeling a part of the Society of St. Francis as a whole, and it is hoped the outreach of this group will continue to be a useful resource for the church.

For more information:

Pam Saunders: pam_saunders77@hotmail.com f

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of the Order to the inspiration of First Order members.

In 1998/9, after the period of fast growth, the Provincial Chapter of TSSF felt it was time to review the organisation and formative processes within the Order. A questionnaire, sent out to all tertiaries, allowed feedback on these important issues. A report found: 'There is a tension between a vision of the Order as a relatively minimal association of individuals, each personally exploring a pattern of discipleship, and a contrasting vision of a relatively strong community fellowship where much is shared and done in common.' (Shackley, 1998.) Consultants, (Sr Joyce CSF and the Ven Malcolm Grundy) worked with five teams of experienced tertiaries to produce a Final Report in 1999, with a new vision for the Order: "It would see the Order as a real community, but one committed to becoming non-hierarchical;" there would be cooperative, collaborative methods in making decisions. Proposals were made for a new structure. A very important recommendation was for "lifelong formation" from cradle to grave; the consultants recommended the formation of local groups: "a family-sized place where Franciscan spirituality can be discovered and shaped."

Over the last ten years, the new structures have been put into practice. Some tertiaries are not entirely reconciled to the new ethos, which emphasises working in community rather than as a collection of individuals. However, according to another questionnaire (2009), the majority of respondents felt that community building was very important. One tertiary wrote: "Community in the local sense means a given group of people with whom I try to work out what it means to be a Franciscan - a group with loving inter-dependence. In the wider sense it means belonging to an international order, which attempts to live with Franciscan ideals based on our Principles." f



A 'Make Poverty History' event in Edinburgh in July, 2005:
tertiaries holding the banners are: left - Richard Atkin and Liz Sim; centre - Anne Gault; right - Judy Hirst, John Macleod, and Rosemary Norwood; sitting - Jennifer Chan CSF, Lynne Niven, Liza Coates and Carol Robertson.

Reflections of a Minister General

Dorothy Brooker TSSF



Peace, love, hope and joy to all.

*Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
Nourish the life of the world in our care;
Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
Trust for the children tomorrow will bear.*

So begins a hymn from two of our New Zealand songwriters, Colin Gibson and Shirley Murray. For me it expresses what the Society of St Francis and more specifically our Third Order represents. As Minister General I have been privileged to have moments of walking on holy ground as I have engaged, prayed, lived amongst our many tertiaries throughout our five provinces, all living out our *Principles* in their daily living.

One of my great joys was to suggest to our newly ordained bishop in the diocese I serve, that he become a Companion of our Society, because he had as Dean in another diocese walked closely with the Third Order. He quickly responded with a yes, and I am conscious that as he serves Christ in this part of God's world, his journey as a Companion with us who follow the Franciscan way will be seen in his leadership and commitment to show Christ by how he lives and to share Christ in all he meets. He recognises the Christ in everyone.

"To know Christ and to make Christ known."

As I have met and walked beside my brothers and sisters following in the way of Francis and Clare, we are very conscious that we have made a promise to make Christ known and loved everywhere; to spread the spirit of love and harmony; to live simply; and to do this by our prayer, study, work, and do it in the spirit of humility, love and joy.

I am always aware that I need to walk gently as I greet my brother or sister who is not always where I am in my journey with Christ. Sometimes I walk in front and

sometimes I walk beside and often I walk behind, but what unites me with those I meet is a realisation that where they are, Christ is also, and how I share Christ with love, tenderness, and yet sometimes with a tough challenge can help in breaking down obstacles and the barriers that can divide us.

"To help us all see that we are all made in the image of God."

As I visit my brothers and sisters I know that the places and people I visit become holy ground. Their hospitality, their inclusive love, and their voice that expresses concern in our diversity gives me the courage and the wisdom that with God's help we can share a wider and more inclusive and hospitable picture of who we are.

I remember a moment of visiting a village in the Solomon Islands and a chief of that village expressing a prayer and wish as he thanked me, acknowledging me not only as Minister General but as a priest and that one day he may welcome me back to be the celebrant at the altar. His church is not yet there, but I rejoiced in the desire by him for change and a recognition that I was part of who he was in our journey together.

In Papua New Guinea I spent time living with one of my Franciscan sisters in her home surrounded by her family, and the care and love I received there, and the wonderful gathering of tertiaries as we explored and learnt more about St Clare of Assisi were for me part of a bigger picture of us as followers of Christ. Similarly, the time of prayer and community as we gathered each day at Greyfriars in Canterbury during the Lambeth Conference and the quiet words of thanks from the bishops who knew of

our prayer presence. And on my visit to Brazil, travelling many miles to formally welcome the groups into our Third Order, and a special moment of prayer at one place as we recited a psalm with four of the sentences in Portuguese and one in English. A recognition of offering praise and worship, and without the barrier of language separating us. Other events that stand out for me are the Chapter meeting in Johannesburg and the sharing together around the theme of love, and being part of Convocations and General Chapters in Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand all with a special message of what it really means to follow in the way of Francis and Clare in our following of Christ, and to discover Christ in one another.

As Minister General I have been honoured to join us together in our unity and also in our diversity, to recognise as Francis did the uniqueness of each part of creation, and especially we, as the human part.

I acknowledge our gratitude and love for the nurturing and care that the First Order brothers gave to the Third Order in its growing to full maturity. As a mother, my



Third and First Order members at Katerada Friary, Papua New Guinea, March 2010. **Worrick SSF** is playing the guitar, **Reuben Arthur SSF** is beside him, **Jean CSF** is seated, and the others are tertiaries and Companions living in the area.

two children were dependent on me in their growing years, but now as adults I greet them and listen to them and learn from them and know that as we share we are not dependent on one another but connected with a bond that can never be broken. My concern for them and their concern for me is to do with love. So it is with our relationship with the First and, may I say, our Second Orders.

I have a special icon that shows Christ walking beside a disciple, with an arm across the disciple's shoulders, one of love, support and yet not of superiority. My prayer is that as we journey together as a Society that image will show me who we are and how we relate to one another.

As I pray my daily Office and Community Obedience, and as I read the *Principles* for each day I have found it helpful to also place beside my daily reading those of my Brothers and Sisters in the First Order,

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Dorothy Brooker TSSF is Minister General of the Third Order and lives in New Zealand.

Guest Minister's Letter

Rev'd Joanna Coney TSSF,
Minister Provincial of the Third Order in the European Province,
writes:

Dear Friends,

It is a great delight to be invited to write the Minister's Letter for this edition of the *franciscan* - devoted as it is to the Third Order. It is always a joy to foster opportunities to further deepen the interdependent relationship between our three Orders within SSF which we all value so highly.

Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few," and challenges us "to go and make disciples of all nations."

So as individual Christians, and as a Franciscan community, we hold this gospel imperative always before us and strive to discern how the Third Order can contribute to the bringing in of God's Kingdom.

In my two years as Minister Provincial of the Third Order in the European Province I have been privileged to visit many of our 43 Areas and meet many individual tertiaries. This is always a humbling and encouraging - and, yes, sometimes frustrating - experience.

But as I talk and worship with them it never fails to excite me when I learn of their faithful devotion to Christ,

and of the mature seriousness with which individual tertiaries live out their vocation and commitment as members of a Religious Order.

It is evident in the depth of prayer and vibrant worship. It is evident in the stunning things initiated and maintained by tertiaries in many parish churches up and down the country and throughout the whole Province. It is evident in the self-giving involvement by individuals and tertiary groups in local communities and in the wider world in amazingly varied and heart-warming ways.

It is evident too in the quiet and devoted living out of our life vows:-

To spread the knowledge and love of Christ;

To promote the way of love and harmony with all creation; and

To live joyfully a life of simplicity and humble service.

We may be a dispersed community of 2000 souls of widely differing background and experience, but we are firmly held together by our shared vows, our Franciscan values and our constant shared prayer for one another. As an Order we are growing. We do not recruit, God does that - but



we do joyfully make ourselves known to all who might be interested in exploring their vocation with us.

So, as we pray and grow together in the twenty-first century we now ask ourselves:

What are we for?

What is God now asking us to be and to do?

How are we to change and develop?

How can we become more effective labourers in God's vineyard?

Pax et Bonum

Joanna Coney TSSF.

Continued from page 6

and to reflect on what each part of the *Principles* is saying to each Order and for me especially as I pray for our Society. What I discover over and over again is that we become one in Christ, living in the footsteps of Francis and Clare.

Each province has its own way of living out our *Principles* and each province has its own challenges. Each province tells a story that completes a whole of who we are, and what they share shows a wider picture of who we are.

As one of my brothers in the Solomon Island shared, what they do in mission and outreach they do representing each of us.

It has been, and continues to be a journey of discovery, a journey of encouragement, a journey of inclusive love, a journey of challenge.

*We are many, we are one,
when the work of Christ is done,
when we live in true community.*

(From another hymn by Colin Gibson.)

As we pray for one another and as we strive to be an Order, I conclude with these words of St Francis, said when he was dying:

"I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours." f

Theme Prayer

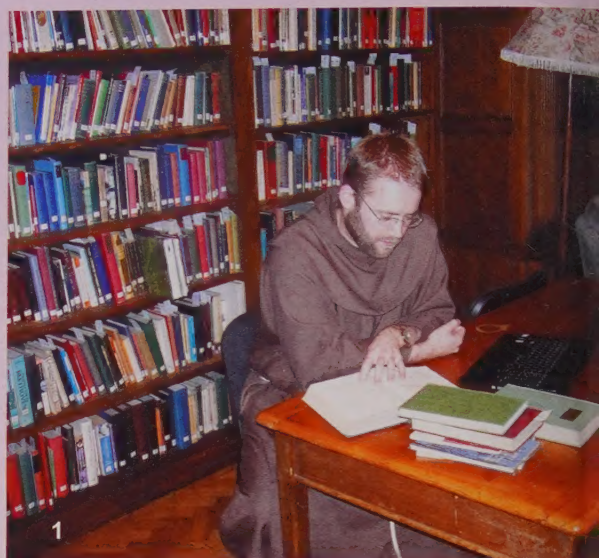


**O God, we give you thanks
for the Third Order of the Society of St Francis.
Grant, we pray, that being knit together
in community and prayer,
we your servants may glorify your holy name
after the example of St Francis,
and win others to your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

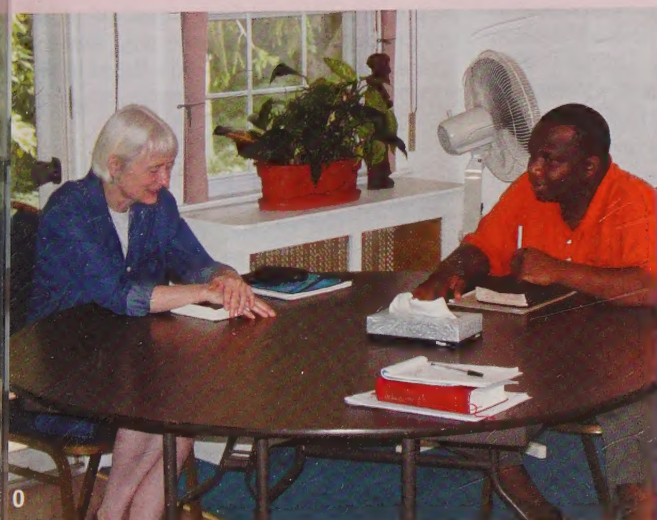
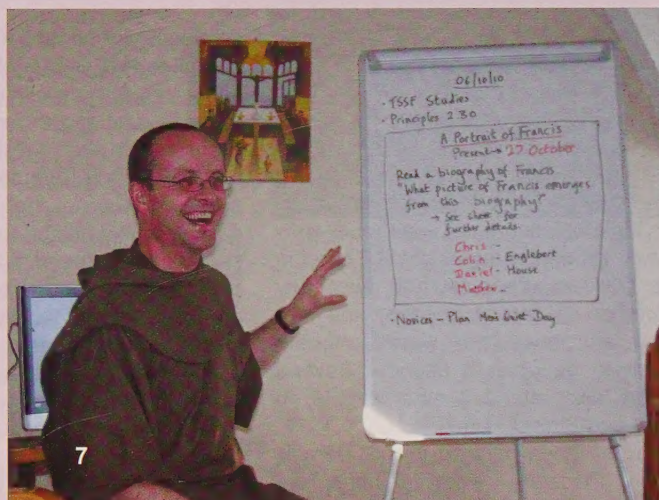
Amen

The formation of our novices and first professed brothers and sisters takes place (1) not only in the classroom and library [Matthew] but in a variety of experiences and in visits to places of historical and spiritual interest. (2) Barnabas Francis is seen on Holy Island, (3) Gerardo (with Jason Robert) in Hexham Abbey. (4) The plan is for all novices to get to Assisi by holding the 'Novice Experience' there once every three years - the group that visited in October 2010 are shown here in the Capella della Pace in the Sacro Convento complex after Gerardo had presided for St Luke's Day. [Vaughan, Desmond Alban, Gerardo, Matthew, Barnabas Francis] (5) One of our postulants, Colin, directs the rehearsal of his script for a school assembly and (6) Gerardo reminds us that cook books are as important in formation as theology books. (7) But Novice Guardian Desmond Alban can sometimes get enthusiastic about study and (8) there are great opportunities with the Poor Clare Federation at Arkley: here Benedict gives a paper. (9) Novices from SSF and OHP met together for study and Vaughan is here seen observing the 1 metre rule of chastity with Sister Helena. (10) Jenny Tee attended the 2009 Formators' Programme in New York, here shown with Bhekimpilo CDC, and Martin John attended the 2010 meeting in the Solomon Islands, staying on for three months' experience of that province as part of our 'blurring the boundaries' policy (see page 16). Peer groups are a valuable part of the support network in initial formation, including those that extend beyond C/SSF. (11) Liz and Jenny Tee attended the First Professed Conference at Derby in April, 2010, along with Catherine CHN and Jane ASSP.

Initial for



on in the First Order



Community Routes



At the Church of St James, Piccadilly: Rev'd Lindsay Meader, **Richard Rohr OFM**, **Beverley CSF**, **Tom Keighly TSSF**, **Rebecca Leam (Franciscans International)**, and **Peter SSF**.

◆◆Franciscan ways

Helen Julian writes:

Richard Rohr is an American Franciscan friar with an important international ministry of speaking and writing, as well as the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As part of his 2010 UK Tour, the Third Order organised a two day conference in central London, and four sisters and a brother were fortunate enough to be able to attend. Several brothers also attended other events, in Oxford and Birmingham.

Many of those packing into St James' Church, Piccadilly, were tertiaries, but others, both Christian and non Christian, had come to hear Richard speak.

He took four themes - non-dual thinking; creation; emerging Christianity; and action and contemplation today - and in wide-ranging talks, and considered responses to questions asked, opened up the themes in thought-provoking and stimulating ways, always with a Franciscan flavour.

It's impossible to summarise such an event; but I was excited by his identification of both the Franciscan movement and the emerging church as forms of 'alternative orthodoxy' - not a rejection of the past, but a rediscovery of what is at its heart. This might mean moving to 'the inside of the edge'.

Another key idea for me was that the incarnation actually began not 2000 years ago, when God became human, but with the big bang, when God materialised. Hence all creation is inherently sacred - a central Franciscan intuition.

And it was good to hear someone else say that if you try to live a life which

combines action and contemplation you can often feel as though you're not doing either properly, certainly by the standards of those who focus on one or the other. Franciscans often feel torn between the two dimensions, tempted to major on one at the expense of the other. These two days certainly helped to encourage me to persevere in the difficult but life-giving task of combining the two; and enthused me once again for the very particular insights of the Franciscan way. Judging by the buzz of conversations at breaks others too were encouraged, enthused and refreshed.

◆◆A Mission in Walsgrave

Chris CSF writes:

From 16 to 26 September, **Chris, Gerardo** and **John Gibson TSSF** were involved in 'Mission 2 Grow', a Parish event in Walsgrave in the Diocese of Coventry. The parish had had a Franciscan mission 25 years ago, and those who remembered it were keen to have a similar experience again. The main focus of the mission was house groups, where the people were encouraged to discuss life issues and the presence of Christ in their lives.

The three missionaries spent a day in the local primary school talking to the children in each class about someone we greatly admired, and the children were asked to do the same. We spent lots of time making visits to individuals in their homes or in hospital and residential homes. This one to one contact, I always feel, is so valuable and meaningful both for the visitor and the person we visit.

Sometimes during a mission we put tremendous energy and preparation into one event. On this occasion it happened to be a five minute rhyming conversation, which was written for the three of us to perform at a talent show on the final Saturday. Whenever I suggested a rehearsal, the others groaned. But in all aspects we got on really well as a team, and I valued having two helpful enthusiasts as my team members.

Seeing the parish from the outside, as it were, we were able to ask people what they valued and hoped for in their worship and the ongoing life of the parish. I was delighted to see a good turn out for the final evening meeting, "Where do we go from here?" The people's thoughts and ideas formed the basis for our feedback report to the parish. I felt this had really been the people's mission, an event which they had worked for and would hopefully want to repeat in another 25 years' time.

◆◆Live the Word

From 25-29 October, the first Walsingham Bible Week took place at the Shrine of Our Lady. Every year many thousands of people come to Walsingham to discover the ways that God's love impacts on their lives through shared worship, times of quiet and the Sacraments of the Church. This exciting new event offered 180 people the opportunity to focus on this experience of encountering the Lord particularly through the truths revealed in Holy Scripture.

Each day commenced with a keynote address led by Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS, the Shrine Administrator and Meg Evening (formerly of CSMV and now living the single consecrated life). The focus for the week was the Pastoral Epistles of Saint Paul to Timothy and Titus. Following the address, Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament provided the prayerful centre to each day, and the space to reflect on the Lord's Word in His



Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS, the Shrine Administrator, gave the keynote address.



*Said Amos to the Sunflower,
"How tall do you intend to grow?"
"To tell the truth", said the Sunflower,
"I really do not know."
"Well" said Amos to the Sunflower,
"I am six foot two".
"In that case said the sunflower
I'm two feet taller than you!
And still growing".*

Nathanael SSF

Presence. During the afternoons various seminars were available. Br Paschal led a seminar focusing on finding wisdom in the company of Jesus through the Psalms, and Br Maximilian offered an introduction to praying with the Scriptures through Lectio Divina. Adam Kendry, Head of Divinity at Ardingly College, explored the Creation stories and the theme of Covenant. A daily sung Mass preceded supper which, as with all the meals, was shared in the refectory, ensuring plenty of opportunity for fellowship within the full timetable.

The evenings concluded with a liturgy in the Shrine Church, wherein the Scriptural theme was further explored through Tuesday's meditation on Our Lady, a liturgy of healing and reconciliation including the laying on of hands, anointing and confession on Wednesday and a rousing Songs of Praise with testimonies on Thursday.

Truly a dynamic encounter with Christ through Word and Sacrament, this is now an annual fixture at the Shrine.

◆◆An Urban Friary on Tyneside

At the Annual Brothers' Meeting at Pentecost 2009 the decision was made to seek to open a new urban house in the North East of England that would have a role in Novice Formation. After discussions and explorations with dioceses in that region, **Alan Michael** has now been instituted and inducted as Vicar of St Peter's Cowgate in Newcastle upon Tyne. In time it is hoped he will be joined in the vicarage by another professed brother and also by up to

two novices who will be able to gain experience of urban ministry and undertake various placements in the city. The parish of St Peter's is situated in an Urban Priority Area, straddling a busy arterial road for the city: the congregation is enthusiastic about the brothers' hopes to build links and a ministry with the particularly challenging area on the far side of that road.

◆◆CSF moves to Lincolnshire

CSF now has a new home in the village of Metheringham, Lincolnshire. The house was purchased in the middle of the year, but as it had by then been empty for 12 months, the brambles had rather taken over, including invading the drains. Damp course work also revealed that part of the house had been built without proper foundations, so the place took on the appearance of a builder's yard for a few months, while the necessary repairs were undertaken. **Liz** oversaw the building work and assisted by chipping plaster off walls, cleaning and painting. **Judith Ann** and **Maureen** moved there in October. The house was blessed by the Bishop of Lincoln on 16 November. The local people as well as diocesan personnel have been very welcoming. It is hoped that the house will become a centre for spirituality as well as various other forms of ministry according to the gifts of the sisters there. The house is set in large grounds which include trees belonging to an old woodland. There is room for one resident guest and up to 24 people in a day group.



*Drain or plant pot?
An inside room with
a new air vent and
the walls awaiting
replastering*



*San Damiano - side view - wall repaired and
damp course work completed; window repairs
still to come*



Compton Enterprises - Sue and Beverley at a car boot sale, ready to sell some odds and ends near the end of the very long task of clearing things from Compton Durville.



Some of the members of the 2010 Franciscan team at Greenbelt: Jane Scriven TSSF, Rachel Holdforth TSSF (novice), Hugh SSF, Maureen CSF and (in front) Carys Underdown TSSF.

◆◆Round up

Peter made his profession in First Vows on 23 October and has moved to Alnmouth from Hilfield. **Alan Michael** has moved from Alnmouth to Cowgate, where he was inducted as Vicar on 17 November. **Jason Robert** is the new Guardian of Alnmouth. **Martin John** has moved to Hilfield after a three months' stay in the Solomon Islands. **Athanasius Faifu**, from the Solomon Islands, is spending six months in the UK, based mainly at the friary in Canning Town.

Korean Brothers **Stephen** and **Lawrence** made their Profession in Life Vows as members of the Society of Saint Francis on 31 October in Seoul Anglican Cathedral. They are now part of the Australia - New Zealand Province, who held their Provincial Chapter Meeting at Gangchon Friary in Korea after the Profession. The next issue of *franciscan* will include photos of the event.

In Assisi, the friary is moving to new accommodation nearby, so will be closed to guests until 1 January 2011.

St Francis Convent at Compton Durville has now closed and the sisters are no longer resident there. *f*

Sixty years in the Third Order

Hugh Beach TSSF



When I joined the Third Order in 1949 it had been in existence for only a dozen years. Formally, that is, because the roots go back much further.

Towards the end of World War II I spent a few months on the staff of the Land Forces Headquarters in Kandy (Ceylon) and then Singapore. The head of my branch was a sapper major called James Fenwick and he took me under his wing.

He was a man of remarkable gifts; he was also a convinced, devout and persuasive Christian. It was his forceful personality coupled with his evident conviction that got me going; emerging from a rather lukewarm public school religiosity with a determination to go for sainthood!

The following year I found myself back at Cambridge, reading mechanical sciences, but immersing myself in most of the available brands of Christian enthusiasm: the Christian Union, Student Christian Movement, mission to hop-pickers and of course college chapel. James soon appeared on the scene, himself by now determined to leave the army and to become an Anglican Franciscan friar. He introduced me to the friary on Lady Margaret Road, a large Victorian mansion inhabited by such striking figures as Fathers Denis and Michael, SSF. I attended occasional services at the friary, one or two retreats and a couple of Easter visits to the mother-house at Cerne Abbas (now called Hilfield). There I met Father-Algy, effectively the Founder of the Society of Saint Francis as we now know it and a famous eccentric. Bird-like and charismatic, he preached about wild flowers and the origins of best loved hymns.

In my last term at Cambridge, having been defeated in an effort to leave the army and train for ordination, I was summoned to Lady Margaret Road for an interview with Fr. Algy, there on a short visit. He invited me to become a member of the Third Order of the Society - a body which he himself had created with the help of a *femme formidable* called Dorothy Swayne. I was delighted at this suggestion and was duly noviced on 4 October 1949. Meanwhile I was invited to a house group at Peckham Rye and on the way home was joined by a young fellow-tertiary and medical student also making her way to Victoria. The acquaintance blossomed (rather slowly on my side) and a year or so later we became engaged. We were invited to attend upon Dorothy Swayne at her house in Wokingham and apparently passed muster - at all events we got married in 1951, being the first pair of tertiaries to do so.

A few weeks later I was professed. During the previous two years my novitiate had been guided by another stalwart of Lady Margaret Road and Vicar of St. Bene't's Church, Fr. Lothian SSF. He had been my wife's spiritual director before I even knew her. He told us once

that he had been praying for us together long before we became engaged. Lothian was a quiet, understated man, diffident to a fault. "I think", he once said, "that I could just bring myself to say 'I believe in God'." His sense of humour was dry, and clumsy use of the English language caused him great pain. The rule of life that I wrote under his guidance has served me well to this day.

There was an annual meeting, normally at St. Margaret's Westminster; other gatherings were rare.

We began our married life at Chatham, my wife a house physician in a local hospital and myself a teacher of mathematics at the School of Military Engineering. The Third Order in those days was a select body, only about 400 strong countrywide, mainly consisting of ladies in the caring professions (often clergy wives) with a smattering of priests and very few laity. It was not exactly a secret society but was certainly a reticent one. The manual was classified as 'Confidential' and only senior friars, and other church people closely connected to them, were expected to invite newcomers to join. There was an annual meeting, normally at St. Margaret's Westminster, at which several brothers would speak, followed by what was delightfully known as 'tea and *conversazione*'. Other gatherings were rare.

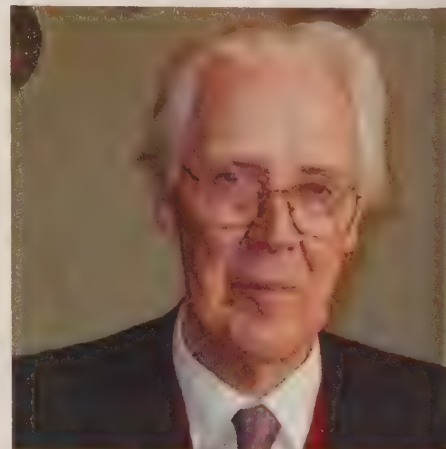
The Army stipulated that, in exchange for three years' expensive education, I must serve for five years before they would release me. They would waive this rule only if I declared myself a conscientious objector, but since I had recently completed two spells of active service that would hardly wash. When the five years were up I had already fathered two offspring, graduated from the Staff College, and been posted to the operations branch in the War Office. With mounting responsibilities this was the wrong time to quit. Successive postings took us to Germany (three times), Kenya, and back to the Ministry of Defence (as it had by then become - also three times),

interspersed with tours at the Staff College (twice more) and to Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities. As each new job came up - and it was always a demanding and interesting one - I kidded myself that I would do just this one more and then retire. But until my time ran out (aged 58) I never did!

In about the mid-1970's the Third Order started to expand, largely due to the work of Br. Edward SSF, a priest with a genius for friendship. Twenty years later the Order was over 2000 strong and had developed a strong sense of its own identity as an Order, largely independent of the Friars. While I was in the army my connection with it had been somewhat episodic, and most unfortunately my wife decided to resign from the order, due entirely to the ham-fistedness of the brother who received our annual reports. This set her free to rib me mercilessly about my failure to live up to the Rule, particularly the commitment to poverty which was difficult to reconcile with the style of life that a general was expected to put on.

After leaving the army I became warden of the Christian conference centre in Windsor Castle, running courses for the clergy and able to attend every service in St. George's Chapel for five years. At the same time, through the offices of Br Edward, I was catapulted into the upper echelons of the Third Order, serving as a Regional Guardian for two tours and as Assistant to the Minister Provincial. That stint completed, I sank gratefully back into the rank and file, where I have served happily for the past fifteen years.

As things have turned out my membership of the Church of England has become more a matter of loyalty to an institution than of a search for sainthood, or of devotion to God or to the person of Our Lord. But underlying all of this has been membership of the Third Order as kind of *Cantus Firmus* or ground base. In old age I am able to spend much more time in private prayer (dare I call it contemplation - probably it is more like dozing) and I have become more aware of life as a succession of daily miracles, invoking gratitude. Sixty years as a member of the Third Order is one of the things I can be most grateful for. *f*



Hugh Beach TSSF

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ISBN 9780 8524 4250 0

Gracewing, 2009, £12.99

Fifty years have passed since the death of Ronald Knox, almost as many since the biography by his close friend Evelyn Waugh appeared. Terry Tastard sets out to utilise the added perspective which the further half century gives us, to set Knox's life 'in the context of his own times, and of ours'.

So here we have a readable, thoroughly researched book, from which much can be learned not only about its subject, but also about Eton College, Oxford University, and the Catholic church in England. This gives it a fascination for anyone with an interest in those times and places.

The author's own story has its similarities to that of Ronald Knox (he was once a valued brother of SSF), but he succeeds in maintaining a historian's objectivity. It is to be hoped that he will attract a wide readership both within and without the Catholic Church.

(Readers of *franciscan* may not be aware that Ronald Knox had a brother Wilfred - not a twin, but close to him in age - whose life followed a parallel course to Ronald's in the Church of England as a priest of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, and who lived in Cambridge for many years in their house in Lady Margaret Road which from 1939-1970 was St Francis House.)

Anselm SSF

Walter Kasper

Harvesting the Fruits

Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue

ISBN 9781 4411 6272 4

Continuum, 2009, £9.99

Cardinal Kasper provides us with an overview of the dialogues which have taken place between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Methodist Churches from 1967 to the present day.

He is, of course, uniquely qualified (as President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican) for this task. He does full justice to each of these four dialogues and achieves the not unambitious task implied in his title - he brings home a rich harvest and as a celebration of the harvest identifies grounds for hope in the continuing processes which have been set up.

He also leaves us with questions. Is anything happening by way of dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek and Slavonic Churches of the east, and the Coptic Church of the south, separated by barriers of greater antiquity than those erected by the protestant

reformations of the sixteenth century? And, what is happening among the non Roman Catholic churches, outside the conversations summarised in this book?

Unavoidably, Kasper views the ecumenical scene through his end of the telescope - which leaves him at the centre. Perhaps a book with a wider scope is overdue, one which would bring the Christian reader up to date with the activities and labours of the World Council of Churches, for example - are there no fruits to be harvested in that vineyard?

Anselm SSF

Paul Avis

Reshaping Ecumenical Theology

The Church Made Whole?

ISBN: 9780 5671 9443 5 (pb)

T & T Clark International,

London, 2010, 209 pp, £19.99

"The ecumenical movement is ripe for reform and renewal," writes Paul Avis in his preface to this volume on ecumenical theology. He writes very lucidly about the ecumenical movement, addressing issues of the ordination of women and homosexuals directly. Now is not the time to withdraw from ecumenical engagement, but to redouble our efforts, he advises. All is not lost. He provides some extremely helpful chapters that re-frame the conversation from an either/or standoff, addressing (among other topics) the role of diversity in unity, the role of reception, building and breaking communion, and ethics and communion. I was very busy with my highlighter.

Prior to reading this book, I have not really understood what reception was all about, and usually feel hurt and angry by talk of breaking communion but never had the theological tools to work my way out of the emotional pit. Avis writes of these things in an inviting way, clearly explaining what a concept ("reception" for instance) is about and how it relates to the current ecumenical situation. He is a great champion of patience, which is not the same thing as "wait and see" as patience in ecumenical dialogue obviously requires a lot of work. I feel more confident of my Anglican perspective in reaching out to Christians of other traditions as a result of reading this book.

As our rhetoric makes us stranger and stranger to each other, I feel readier to engage other Anglicans as well.

Clark Berge SSF

Michael Meacher.

Destination of the Species

ISBN 9781 8469 4263 1

O Books, 2010, 235 pp, £9.99

Increasingly, it seems, more shelf space is given in bookshops to popular science than to religion, and certainly to Christianity in particular. As Franciscans rooted in an incarnational theology, we would applaud this active interest in seeking to understand the origins of our universe and human life in particular. I

would hope however, alongside all people of faith, we would actively resist voices that seek to remove God completely from the picture. To this end, Michael Meacher MP has written a timely and profoundly important book.

Michael Meacher notes in his introduction that he writes from the point of view of a sceptical enquirer, seeking to explore some of the fundamental questions that surround our human existence, our origins and our ultimate destination as a species. He approaches these questions through exploring a wealth of scientific discovery and theory, alongside examining the development of human philosophical and spiritual enquiry. He challenges the view held by some popular scientists that the universe is a collision of what he calls "pitiless, directionless chance", by suggesting that the evidence shows instead something altogether more purposeful.

At a time of ecological crises, Michael Meacher draws much needed attention to the place of humankind in the awe inspiring cosmological scale. It is a startling thought that out of billions of years of the universe's life, humanity has occupied just 40,000 years, and yet the cosmological environment is intricately suited to our existence. This book challenges the constant desire of humankind to exercise the politics of greed, conquest and self-interest, and urges us to engage our philosophical and spiritual insights as a way of perceiving more clearly the deeply interconnected relationship we have with the cosmos.

As Christians, and Franciscans in particular, this is a tremendously useful book for informing our dialogue with all those we meet who seek to understand the environmental and cosmological context of humankind. The closing chapter particularly would provide very good background reading for moving such people further in the direction of meeting the person of Jesus. To make such an introduction is not Michael Meacher's specific task, but in these pages he has certainly provided beneficial tools for those of us whose task it is.

Maximilian SSF

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Pauline J. Shaw (Sr M. Francine MFIC)

Elizabeth Hayes

Pioneer Franciscan Journalist

ISBN 9780 8524 4209 8

Gracewing, 2009, £14.99

Pauline Shaw tells the story of the origins of Franciscan journalism, which contains much to fascinate the readers (and editors) of *franciscan*.

Elizabeth Hayes was born in Guernsey in 1823 and left the island about 20 years later. As a child she had read widely under the tutelage of her clergyman father. Clearly she was a very gifted young woman who found her way to Wantage where she rapidly established herself and was instrumental in starting the three schools in the village before falling out with the vicar-founder, William Butler, in 1856. She then moved to London and eventually to the Church of Rome.

The Oxford Movement was in full flood and Sister Elizabeth's story features all the great names including that of Henry (later Cardinal) Manning, her spiritual director. The narrative becomes hard to follow as the heroine moves rapidly, as a religious, from one missionary endeavour to the next. She crossed the Atlantic many times, and lived in France and then in Germany at the time of the Franco-Prussian war. In 1873 she founded a mission at Belle Prairie, Minnesota, and it was here that she set up a printing works and embarked upon the Apostolate of the Press. She launched the 'Annals of Our Lady of the Angels' in January, 1874.

This date marks the birth of Franciscan journalism, and Elizabeth spent the rest of her life nurturing, editing, managing, promoting this monthly whose purpose was the evangelisation and education of a wide readership in Christian and Franciscan truth for whom 'magazines' before the days of radio and TV were a lifeline. This is not to say that Elizabeth settled down in Belle Prairie - she lived much of the time in Rome as Mother General of her Franciscan Third Order Regular Institute, and died there in 1894.

Shaw's book contains much else on the subject of nineteenth century journalism which is not of such immediate interest to the non specialist, but there is much here to make us aware that this venture in Anglican Franciscan literature (*franciscan*) has roots deeper even than the *Floweret* of the 1920's from Hilfield.

Anselm SSF

Andrew Clitherow

Prayer, the Embrace of Love

ISBN 9780 2810 6152 5

SPCK, 2009, £9.99

This book is to be recommended to anyone for whom prayer seems to be marking time. Spiritual directors should also read it, for their own benefit and for that of others. By way of comment, it should be said that Clitherow makes no attempt to cut corners or to over simplify; the reader is not left with the impression

that she/he is being talked down to or that problems are being brushed aside.

It is a bible based book, yet it includes, usually towards the beginning of each section, a story from daily life - and as the author is a parish priest these are drawn from a wide range of experience. The clear structure of the book makes it easy to memorise. There are four parts - Grounded through prayer, Growing through prayer, Giving through prayer, The prayer of Stillness. And in each part there are four sections ending with three short, practical suggestions on grounding, reflecting, praying. The concluding part departs from this pattern and ends with a suggested way of prayer - 'The Prayer of Stillness'.

In previous books Clitherow has written mainly for clergy, a tired vicar writing for tired vicars. Here is something for anyone serious about prayer, and perhaps unaware that prayer is about love - or nothing.

Anselm SSF

Cally Hammond

Joyful Christianity

Finding Jesus in the World

ISBN: 9780 2810 6087 0

SPCK, London, 2009, 75 pp, £8.99

This is a book of reflections on the ancient prayer known as the 'joyful mysteries': the annunciation to Mary, the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the nativity of Jesus, the presentation in the temple, and the finding of Jesus in the temple. For each, the author provides the scripture passage on which it is based, a reflection, a prayer and some questions to promote further reflection and prayer.

The author's reflections, which are the main content of the book, have a strong theological content, exploring how the scripture passage concerned with the 'mystery' connects with other passages to do with this period in Jesus' life or with the teaching that the evangelist is revealing. For example, the Visitation provides a springboard for discussing the work and gift of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to respond to God and to recognize the divine presence. There is some 'credibility check' in her engagement with the scripture passage, as she offers some cultural input relating to the original setting and also recognises the questions that may arise in twenty-first century minds, and these questions are addressed in practical and faith-full ways. But the main thrust of the reflections is to relate the 'mysteries' to our time and our world, and the relationships which we build in the communities around us. They are also an encouragement to live the faith with confidence, for, as she states in the preface, this is a hallmark of 'joyful Christianity'.

While this book is especially relevant to the seasons of Christmas through to Candlemas, its scope is broad enough to be a valuable aid to prayer at any time of the year.

Maureen CSF

The Daily Office SSF, 2010

Based on *Common Worship Daily Prayer*, with additional material for Franciscan saints and festivals and other major festivals.

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Learning peace in the Solomon Islands

The 2010 International Formators' Conference

Desmond Alban SSF

The 'Community Routes' of January 2010 reported on the first C/SSF International Formators' Conference which had been held in New York and Boston in the summer of 2009. That meeting marked the start of a series of events to bring together from across the world those concerned with the initial formation of our sisters and brothers, and in July 2010 a group of us met together again, this time in the Solomon Islands.



Meeting in hut built for the purpose: **Joyce, Selwyn Suma (PNG), Martin John, and Simon (USA).**



Playing volleyball: **Churchill, Caspar, Selwyn Suma and Sr Mary Laulo of the Sisters of Melanesia.**



The Canteen at Little Portion, part of the brothers' means of income: **Christopher John (A-NZ)** is buying from **Isom Waisi**. The decorations are made from sweet wrappers.



Graves of the seven Melanesian Brotherhood martyrs at **Tabalia**

Beginning and ending in the capital, Honiara, we spent most of the time staying as guests of the brothers at the large and stunningly beautiful rural house of Hautambu, La Verna, and meeting too with their next door neighbours at Little Portion, also known as 'the farm'. It was from there that the meat for our feasts and other meals arrived, as well as the extra diesel-generated electricity, paid for as a luxury and convenience for several hours each morning and evening during the conference. It was also at Little Portion that we occasionally joined in the volleyball and football which are part of the timetable in these youthful SSF houses.

In the middle of our conference, by way of a group-building exercise and a chance to see something of Melanesian village life, we 'canoed' across a choppy but azure blue sea to spend a night on the Island of Savo. Our memorable visit began on that island with the wonderful village welcome, similar to that which the brothers had arranged for us at Hautambu; 'warriors' first challenging us before children garlanded us with flowers and the village catechist, a tertiary, made his welcoming speech. That was followed by a hair-raising hike up the route of a washed-away path and an ever hotter stream to the caldera of the active volcano which forms the island. On our return we enjoyed a wash in water from a well on the beach - the geothermal heat giving us our only 'hot shower' in three weeks - before our feast with the villagers, after which we shared together something of our lives and stories. We joined them too for Sunday Mass in the church before our return across the sea.

Apart from that night, we spent the whole time on the main island of Guadalcanal, but even Hautambu was for many of us one of the most remote places we had ever visited. So why there?

Well with its abundance of enquirers, postulants and novices Hautambu is a good place to think about formation, but it was also because the previous year the brothers in the Pacific had invited the rest of us to come and see for ourselves what life is like as an SSF brother in that part of the world, as we thought about our life in a post-colonial context. But we also did so because we wanted to reflect on our Franciscan calling to be Instruments of Peace and

to hear first hand about the literally 'front line' work that our brothers had been engaged in during a recent time of unrest and civil war, 'The Tension', that afflicted the country for several years just a decade ago.

For the first week of our conference two Australian facilitators led us in an intensive journey through all three workshop levels of the 'Alternatives to Violence Project'. The next part of the programme was more 'home-grown' as we discussed how to use the early stories of Francis as sources for peace and reconciliation. Bishop Terry Brown was with us that week, and explained the background to 'The Tension', but most movingly several local brothers spoke directly about their own experiences during that dangerous and frightening time as they placed themselves between the warring parties, befriending and praying with both sides in turn, or as they navigated their little boat far out to sea and back again to bypass the roadblocks which isolated them and other local people from the important source of various supplies in Honiara. The story best known in the UK perhaps is that of seven young members of another Anglican Community, the Melanesian Brotherhood, who were tortured and killed in 2003, and we visited the graves of those 'Seven Martyrs', now commemorated in the Church of England Calendar, but it was clear that our SSF brothers had also made an important contribution at significant personal risk to that vital work of reconciliation.

To learn first hand from the brothers themselves in the place where these recent events actually happened was reason enough for our journey, but the experience of living the gospel life together in the context of one of the most beautiful but underdeveloped nations on earth is one that will probably help to form our attitudes and Franciscan vision for years to come. *f*



Martin John, Esther a Companion, and Desmond Alban - a 'farewell' photo.